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EXCISE

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ACTION NEA-11
INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ADS-00 SY-05 DCT-02 PM-07
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-01 ICA-11 /096 W
----------096010 200046Z /54

R 171714Z SEP 80
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7327
ALL EC CAPITALS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY LH DATE 12 JUL 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 19862
E.O. 12065 RDS-1 9/17/10 (STREATOR, E.J.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, UK, LY
SUBJECT: THREE LIBYANS HIT-SQUAD MEMBERS IMPRISONED FOR LIFE
UNCL. 1. ON SEPTEMBER 16 TWO LIBYANS (BEN HASAN MUHAMMAD AL-MASRI AND MAGIB MUFTA GASMI) WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR THE MURDER LAST APRIL OF LIBYAN JOURNALIST MUHAMMAD RAMADAN IN THE COURTYARD OF THE LONDON MOSQUE. BOTH PLEADED GUILTY TO THE CHARGE. THE PROSECUTION STATED, "IT IS CLEAR FROM THE EVIDENCE THAT, WHILE MASQUERADING AS TOURISTS, THEY CAME TO THIS COUNTRY IN FACT AS ASSASSINS TO MURDER FOR POLITICAL MOTIVES." HE ADDED THAT, "MR. GASMI FREELY CONFESSED, ONE MIGHT ALSO SAY BOASTED, OF HIS PART IN THE MATTER." THE PROSECUTOR EXPLAINED AL-MASRI ADMITTED HE HAD KILLED THE EXILE JOURNALIST BECAUSE RAMADAN HAD "THREATENED

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THE HONOR OF LIBYA," JUSTIFYING HIS CONDUCT BECAUSE HE WAS SERVING THE REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE. IN DEFENSE, THEIR LAWYER SAID THE TWO MEN WERE CARRYING OUT A SENTENCE PASSED ON RAMADAN BY THE LIBYAN REVOLUTIONARY COURT. A THIRD LIBYAN (IBRUK ALI MUHAMMAD AL-GIDDAL) PLEADED GUILTY TO MURDERING MAHMUD NAFA, A LIBYAN LAWYER, IN LATE APRIL, AND ALSO RECEIVED A LIFE SENTENCE.
2. PRESS REPORTS OF THE TRIAL CONTAINED AN APPEAL FROM LONDON PEOPLE'S BUREAU CHAIRMAN MABRUK AL-QAID THAT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO FOSTER GOOD RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN AND IMPROVE LIBYA'S TARNISHED IMAGE IN THE EYES OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC.
3 [redacted] BIEB

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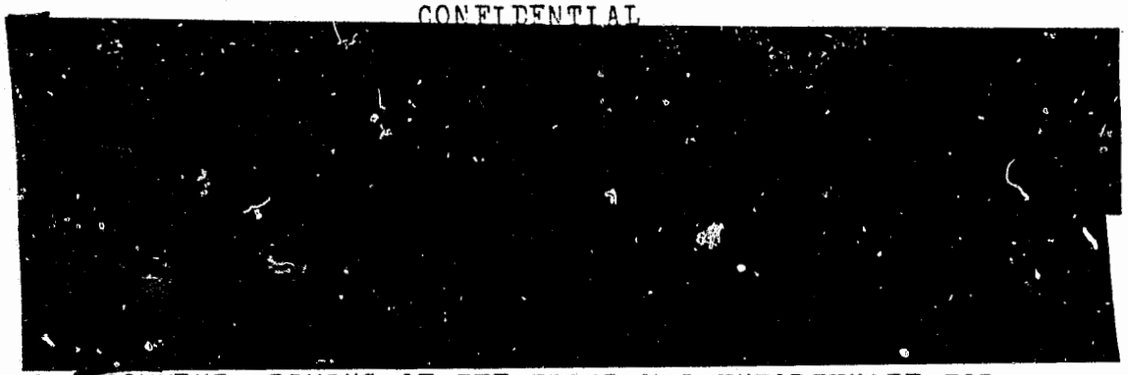

B / E B

5. COMMENT: TIMING OF THE TRIAL WAS UNFORTUNATE FOR THE PEOPLE'S BUREAU. LOCAL MEDIA HAVE PROVIDED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF HIT SQUAD TRIAL ON THE EVE OF LIBYAN NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION SEPTEMBER 17.BREWSTER
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